

Referendum for a new Dodgeville Public Library: You have questions, we have answers.

“Why should the City of Dodgeville build a new library now?”

The current Library and City Hall building was built in 1988 to serve a city population of under 4,000 citizens and had a footprint of 6,700 sq. ft. The primary focus of the library was on physical check-out of standard adult and children’s books with minimal programming and services to the community. The library received less than 33,000 visits from all patrons in 1990. There were no public use computers and the library received about 100 patrons per day. The Library had three full time and two part time staff upstairs, while the City Hall had only two full time and five part time staff downstairs. The Library now has four full time and ten part time staff upstairs, while the City Hall has six full time and three part time staff downstairs. The Dodgeville City Hall needs room to expand and a new library would allow City Hall to renovate space upstairs to alleviate crowding and City storage challenges.

By 2018, the library held 250 programs attended by over 5,700 people of all ages. Many of these programs need to occur in the City Council chambers or off-site due to lack of suitable space. The library now has 21 public use computers which were used by over 6,300 people to find work, take classes, get information and remain in contact with friends, family, and colleagues. In 2018, there were more than 58,000 visits to the Library; a nearly two-fold increase from 1990, while still occupying the same building. This level of use, which is a good sign for the City, causes significant crowding issues during high-use times and creates a loud environment for those desiring quiet reading and study time.

In 1990, the library’s collection stood at 15,000 physical items, mostly books. The library currently has a collection of over 51,000 items, including DVD’s, CDs, audiobooks, large-print, and braille. The library is currently paying \$100 per month to store the donated collection of Dodgeville’s renowned humorist Ron Dentinger which it has no room to display. While we have a diverse and wonderful collection of materials, much of it is on the lowest and highest shelves where they can be difficult to access, or not on display at all.

As of 2020, the City of Dodgeville is nearing 4,800 citizens, and patron visits have nearly doubled. With the boom of Madison, Fitchburg, and Verona business, Dodgeville’s population size is estimated to increase to over 5,500 in the next couple of decades. With a new building, the library will finally be able to expand its physical footprint to match the service footprint it has provided for decades and will be needed going into our bright future.

This is a large \$7 million building; however, interest rates are still low and the impact to taxpayers would only be \$0.37 per day per \$100,000 of assessed value. There will be significant fundraising efforts made throughout the Township and Iowa County to reduce this cost to the City. The Public Library Foundation has generously agreed to donate \$1 million dollars to the overall project cost if a new building is approved by the voters on the February 18<sup>th</sup> referendum.

This new library would serve as a city and community anchor for the foreseeable future. We encourage you to stop in at the current library to see the architectural drawings now on display.

The Dodgeville Public Library Board of Trustees